



Committee on Homeland Security Democrats

Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member

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U.S. REP. BILL PASCRELL HONORED BY THE CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES INSTITUTE

*Pascrell Recognized as "Legislator of the Year" at
Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner*

April 7, 2005, Washington, DC – The Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) will honor U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ-08) tonight as its "2005 Legislator of the Year" for his leadership on behalf of first responders nationwide. Rep. Pascrell, who is a Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security and the Ranking Democrat on the Emergency Preparedness, Science and Technology Subcommittee, will be honored along with the Homeland Security Committee Chairman Christopher Cox (R-CA-48). Over 2000 firefighters from around the country will attend the event at the Washington Hilton.

"I am tremendously honored to be recognized by such an outstanding group of courageous and dedicated professionals," stated Rep. Pascrell, a sponsor of the bipartisan *Funding for First Responders Act*, which redirects funding to genuine national security priorities. "Thanks to a concerted effort in the House and Senate, the federal government has solidified its commitment to local firefighters, first responders and the taxpayers they protect. You can count on me to keep fighting for those who make the ultimate commitment to us every day."

The awards will be presented at the 17th Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner to take place in Washington, DC. The theme for this year's program is "Protecting Our Communities...and Everyone Goes Home." The dinner provides an extraordinary opportunity for Congressional and Administration officials to engage with fire service leaders in discussions about federal programs and legislation addressing the needs of local first responders. Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff will be the main speaker.

"We appreciate the tremendous support we have received from Congressmen Pascrell and Cox," said CFSI Executive Director Bill Webb. "When members of Congress prevail on our behalf, we should always find ways to extend our thanks and appreciation. On April 7th, we have an opportunity to say thanks to two major supporters of ours."

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“Clearly, first responders are charged with an enormous daily risk and must have the resources to protect themselves at all levels of confrontation,” added Rep. Pascrell. “This isn’t a Republican or Democratic issue. Supporting local fire departments, EMS teams and healthcare professionals is an obligation that cannot be marred by politics. They deserve nothing less than the full partnership of the federal government.”

Rep. Pascrell is a nationally recognized leader in Congress on the issue of fire safety, having proudly authored the F.I.R.E. (Firefighter Investment and Response Enhancement) Act, a comprehensive federal commitment to our local fire departments. The grant program, now titled the [Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program](#), is administered by the [Department of Homeland Security](#) and delivers federal dollars directly to career, combination, and volunteer fire departments.

“I am pleased that Congressman Pascrell has been distinguished with an award that highlights his steadfast involvement and dedication to fire fighter issues,” stated Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS-02), Ranking Democratic Member on the Homeland Security Committee. “He has been a pioneer for our nation’s emergency services and has vigorously fought for funding for the FIRE Act, a bill he originally authored. There is no greater task than securing our homeland today from terrorist attacks and as the Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Science and Technology, I know that Congressman Pascrell will continue to excel and effectively use his leadership to continue to combat the war on terror.”

“There is no greater task facing our government today than to protect and defend our cities and towns. Bill Pascrell's effort in Congress has been marked by his dedicated leadership on issues facing our nation's first responders. He has been a steadfast voice on enhancing our homeland defense,” stated Rep. Curt Weldon (R-PA-07), a former volunteer Fire Chief. “I am proud to serve with him and Chairman Cox on the Homeland Security Committee and congratulate them both on this most deserved recognition.”

Established in 1989 as a non-profit, non-partisan institute, the Congressional Fire Services Institute is designed to educate Congress about fire and emergency services. Its mission is achieved by providing an array of programs to engage members of Congress in fire and life safety issues. Among the national fire service organizations, CFSI strives to build consensus for federal legislation benefiting all facets of the fire and emergency services.

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